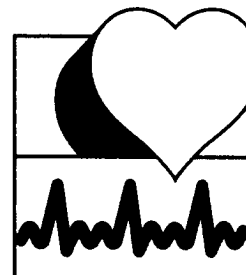


The Heartbeat

A Quarterly Newsletter of the Heart-4-Haiti Lutheran Mission Society - Trinity Lutheran Church, Vallonia, IN

Volume3, Number1

January, 2007



To all individuals, children of schools,
congregations

who are supporting the ministry of the
Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran
Church and the Student Adoption:

Grace and Peace to you from God our Lord
and Savior Jesus Christ!

I want to address myself to all of you, dear
Brothers, Sisters and Friends in Christ. I am
writing from Haiti; I miss you all. Needless
to say, I enjoyed the time we spent together in
various areas of Indiana. My trips are always
a blessing for the ministry down here. But
this time the trip I made to Indiana, visiting,
talking, and making presentations cannot be
compared to any of the others.

It is really difficult for me to find the right
words to express my thanks and gratitude to all
the supporters. First of all, I want to thank the
children of the different schools for collecting
money for the car; a special thank-you to the

Lutheran Central School for their contributions that purchased a computer for me. You are all thanked because you have contributed to the progress of the work, either via your prayers or by your financial support.

Thank you so much also for your continuing support for the "Student Adoption Program". Your contributions have almost taken care of our three-month debt. Before I came to the U.S. it was very difficult for me to have meetings with the teachers because they were not paid; but now I feel very open with them and they are very happy. Thank you very much for taking away most of the stress. Your work is not in vain in the Lord.

- Thankful for the blessings you have shared with me, Pastor Thomas Bernard

Good Shepherd Evangelical Lutheran Church, Port-au-Prince, Haiti

(Editor's Note: The vehicle for Pastor Bernard was purchased for \$22,250; the cost of insurance, taxes, registration, and plates was \$1500; and \$1000 was sent earlier to Pastor Bernard which he will use to defray the cost of fuel. Diesel fuel in Haiti costs \$4.50 per gallon in U.S. currency. In the future it is our plan to send \$100 per month to defray some of the fuel cost. If anyone would like to donate toward that fund, it would be much appreciated! See address on back page of newsletter.)

Would You Like to Receive Direct E-Mails from Pastor Bernard?

As mentioned above, Pastor Bernard now has a computer and from time to time sends progress reports, prayer letters, and thank-you's. If you would like to receive his e-mails directly from him, please e-mail him. His e-mail address is: bernardthomas@hotmail.com Your name will be added to his list.



*Pastor Thomas Bernard with the new KIA 4WD Diesel Vehicle which was purchased in Haiti in November, 2006, after Bernard's return to Haiti from the U.S. Many supporters have contributed funds to make this wonderful day a reality for Haiti Missions & Pastor Bernard! **YOUR GENEROSITY MADE IT HAPPEN!!!!***

December 13, 2006

PRAYER REQUESTS!

Dear Brothers/Sisters/Friends in Christ,

Grace and Peace to you from God our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Concerned, scared, frustrated, depressed and caring about the status quo of the situation of our nation, I cannot stay passive without taking any position regarding what is going on at this present time. Day by day Haiti finds itself in a chaotic situation. It seems that the Haitian people are paying a debt/price. No one is living. When we consider the sufferings of the children, parents, and teachers and so on, I wonder if we are really living. As a Christian and a pastor, I am asking myself if our God does not see the evil actions and deeds of the wicked. This time is worse than any other time that I have ever lived.

The phenomenon of the kidnapping is something that preoccupies all of us down here except the kidnapers and the selfish politicians, the gluttons that are working in the government. Right now the children, teachers, parents, and some other specific people are the main targets upon which the kidnapers focus themselves. In many schools in the city children are kidnapped and some of them are just offered in human sacrifice. Two weeks ago a 22 year-old university young girl was kidnapped and after receiving the ransom from her poor mother, the kidnapers killed her; even before the killing they tortured her, took her eyes out, and made so many other types of evil treatment to her. In the same week a 6 year-old boy from the "St John the Evangelist School" has been kidnapped in Port-au-Prince and the body was found in Cap-Haitien, the second largest city of the country (in a forest). Before they killed him, they kept him in the forest for a few days where big snakes and other wild animals visited him. This Monday in the "Sacre Coeur School" led by the Catholic Sisters, a six-year-old child is kidnapped and when his father was trying to release him, the kidnapers shot him. What a tragedy are we Haitian brothers and sisters going through!

Right in Port-au-Prince, the capital city we have at least 25 cases of kidnapping in just one day without counting other cases that are not reported. This Wednesday it is reported in the news that a school bus transporting children to school was kidnapped. This same day a couple was taking their four children to school, the kidnapers came in, took the car with all of the four children, and asked the parents to get out. So, they left with the children. In Laboul 12, up in Petion-Ville, the kidnapers got into a house and took the child of that family and left with him. These three cases just happened this Wednesday.

The population is abandoned to itself. No one cares. The government is just taking care of its own business, filling its stomach with sins and so on. Also the foreign troops and organizations that are in Haiti are doing nothing to prevent the nation from experiencing such tragedies even though their main goal down here is for stabilization. As a father of 3

children, and a pastor pastoring God's people either at school or at church, I feel frustrated, sad, depressed and discouraged to hear and to see those things in the news. Anytime I hear and see them, I think of my children, those attending our school and church. I cannot prevent tears coming from my eyes and it seems that a sharp knife is cutting my heart into pieces. In spite of all, I do not doubt God's love for the children and for us. God loves us all no matter how things are going on either in our lives or in our country where we live.

I find comforting words in the Lamentations of Jeremiah 3:19-26 that says: "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me. Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope: Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassion never fails. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. I say to myself, the Lord is my portion; therefore I will wait on him. The Lord is good to those whose hope is in him; to the one who seeks him; it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the Lord."

I don't know what to do in such a terrible situation but again when I open my Bible in II Chronicles 20: 6-17 that states: "O Lord, God of our fathers, are you not the God who is in heaven? You rule over all the kingdoms of the nations. Power and might are in your hand, and no one can withstand you. O our God, did you not drive out the inhabitants of this land before your people Israel and give it forever to the descendants of Abraham your friend? They have lived in it and have built in it a sanctuary for your name, saying, if calamity comes upon us, whether the sword of judgment, or plague or famine, we will stand in your presence before this temple that bears your name and will cry out to you in our distress, and you will hear us and save."

Verse 12: O our God, will you not judge them? For we have no power to face this vast army that is attacking us. We do not know what to do, but our eyes are upon you. Verse 17: you will not have to fight this battle. Take up your positions; stand firm and see the deliverance the Lord will give you, O Judah and Jerusalem. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.

Again I find comfort and am ready to put myself to work, even with wet eyes. **This is the purpose of my letter, that you support the Haitian families, the children, teachers, workers, and the church in your prayers.** I consider the church to be like a living organism living in a corrupted and evil society. She will need to take appropriate positions when things are going so bad in the society, not like corrupted politicians, but as faithful servants of God. By Jesus Christ God will answer their prayers. Faithful prayers can accomplish tremendous things. James 3:13-18

Thank you so much for your prayers and may God continue to bless you and your ministry!

In Him,
Pastor Thomas Bernard

P.S. to "PRAYER REQUESTS"

This morning while writing this letter I received a telephone call from my wife saying: "Thomas, be careful and don't use the same way you took this morning when you were taking the children to school because they have just kidnapped some one there a few minutes ago, reported a friend of mine." I answered and said to her, "I have no choice; I have to go through there to get to the school where my children go." That happened at Markendal Street where the school is located. Again, that has created a big negative impact in me. But finally I made the decision to go and get my children with **Psalm 23:4, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."**

Look How Far Your Money Goes in Haiti!

Following are listed the Personnel and Budgets for the Port-au-Prince District:

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church & School

Students: 300
Teachers: 23
Principals: 2
Security 1
Cooks/Janitors: 4
Pastor: 1
Vicar: 1
Church Attendance: 300
Tuition per child: \$10.00/month - Elementary School
\$20.00/month - High School
Total annual budget: \$44,400.00
*Pastor and Vicar are not included in budget

Village of Peace, Leogani, and Route de Freres Schools

Total # of Students: 265-285
Teachers: 20
Principals: 3
Cooks/Janitors: 4
Security: 2
Lay Minister: 3
Church Attendance: 265
Tuition per child: \$10.00 /quarter
Total annual budget for three schools: \$21,420 + \$715 per year.

Totals for All Four Schools

Total students: 585
Total church attendance per Sunday: 565
Total Budget for the Entire Port-au-Prince District:
\$66,535.00

Even Small Contributions are so Important!!

Looking at the budget at the left side of this page, you can easily see that a relatively small budget (\$66,535) educates many children (585), plus feeding them one meal a day. When you contribute to the Student Adoption Program you get a "Big Bang for your Buck"! Keep in mind that this Adoption Program continues **all year long**, not only in the fall of the year! Your contributions are so vital; they make a huge impact on the lives of children in Haiti! Thank you for giving so generously.

Only about 50% of the parents of children in the 4 Lutheran schools in the Port-au-Prince area are able to pay their own children's tuition - and that tuition only pays a fraction of the budget. Salaries for the teachers, principals, and workers, are always behind by 2 or 3 months, as contributions to the "Student Adoption Program" don't cover these salaries. This is another area where financial help is always needed - for church workers' salaries in Haiti.



New Haiti Web Site

We are in the process of developing a website that will include many communications and pictures from Haiti. Our next edition of Heart-4-Haiti will include more information on that link with Haiti Missions.



Pictured above are Pastor Bernard Thomas (second from left - in rear), his wife, Margareth, his children - Benjamin, age 3, Quincy, age 8, Christina, age 10, and the Vicar of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Port-au-Prince, Haiti.